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'TO TEACH LESSON'

Three held for torching MLA's SUVs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IN a swift operation, the South-East Division police arrested three persons who set fire to two SUVs belonging to Bommanahalli BJP MLA Satish Reddy in the early hours of Thursday. While the motive is yet to be established, it is said that the trio committed the act as one of them was not given an opportunity to meet the MLA on two occasions and they were upset that Reddy was not helping the poor.

The accused have been identified as Sagar (19), a resident of Garvebavipalya near Madiwala, Sridhar (20) of Begur and Naveen (22) of Bandepalya. All three are said to be unemployed.

City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant told the media on Friday that there were no clues about the accused, but the police conducted a detailed technical investigation and zeroed in on a bike that was used by the accused.

"The police teams had verified visuals captured by hundreds of CCTV cameras in the locality. It was found that the accused had escaped on a bike after committing the offence. The image of that visual was enlarged to get the registration number," the Police Commissioner said. CONTINUED ON: P5

A NATION CELEBRATES

With the country gearing up for its 75th Independence Day, Vidhana Soudha is all decked up in bright lights depicting the Tricolour, in Bengaluru on Friday evening | VINOD KUMAR T

NIA

M'LURU LIKELY TO GET AGENCY OFFICE

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Friday hinted at opening an office of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in Mangaluru. Addressing reporters in Udupi, Bommai informed that the Home Minister has already conducted two meetings in this regard. "In the coming days, the Home Minister will visit the coastal city and review the situation. Later we will sit together and decide," he said. P4

B'luru may see weekend curfew, tougher restrictions after Aug 15

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

WEEKEND curfews and tougher restrictions are likely to be back in Bengaluru after Sunday, to contain the spread of Covid, although a lockdown is not being considered for now.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Friday said in Udupi that he will hold an emergency meeting with experts on Saturday afternoon and then take a decision.

, who is also minister in charge of Bengaluru, dismissed the probability of a lockdown in Bengaluru as of now but hinted that tougher rules could come into force after August 15. "We will hold a detailed discussion with the Technical Advisory Committee and review the present situation. Kerala has been witnessing a high Covid caseload. We need to take all possible steps to avert a third wave in the State," he said in Bengaluru.

Multiple meetings have been held and guidelines like restricting crowds during the festival season have been issued, he said. "Lockdown is not the only solution. It creates a lot of problems for people. We will have to take other possible steps to handle the Covid situation."

He said there has been no drastic rise in Covid cases among children in the State. "The government, however, is taking all possible steps to ramp up infrastructure, including setting up of new paediatric hospitals and training doctors to treat kids," he added. CONTINUED ON: P3

'If situation allows, may open primary schools'

Even as Covid cases steadily rise in the state, the Education Department is preparing to reopen schools for Classes 9-12 on August 23. Should this materialise, the government may look at a September reopening for lower grades as well. Primary and Secondary Education Minister BC Nagesh told TNIE that once the classes for older students begin, the department will wait for a week to review the situation, and the expert committee will take a decision on starting classes for primary students. P2

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban close in on Kabul, world on edge

Hectic parleys under way to negotiate a deal with the militia

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE fall of Kabul looked imminent on Friday with the Taliban intensifying its offensive in Afghanistan by capturing four more provincial capitals – Zabul, Tarin Kowt, Firuz Koh and Logar – in a span of 24 hours. The fundamentalist Islamist militia has now encircled the capital and largest city Kabul and seemed to gain full control of the country much earlier than projected. It already has taken control over two-thirds of the country including Kandahar and Herat, the second and third largest cities. While Kabul has not directly come under threat yet, it could happen any moment.

Meanwhile, some media reports said hectic parleys are underway to negotiate a peace deal with the militia. But the Taliban maintains it won't come to the talks table until President Ashraf Ghani steps down. In which case, chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Dr Adbullah Abdullah may head a caretaker government to facilitate the transition.

With the situation remaining fluid, most countries have started evacuating staff from their embassies in Kabul. On Friday, Denmark and Finland joined the US, UK and Canada to pull out their personnel.

The US said on Thursday it would deploy 3,000 additional troops in a day or two to help evacuate its people from the US Embassy in Kabul. The UK, too, is sending 600 troops to speed up evacuation of its national from the country. Canada is also rushing additional forces.

India, which flew out its staff from the Mazar-e-Sharif consulate on Wednesday, said it has no immediate plan to close the embassy in Kabul.

With the dreaded Taliban closing in, thousands of Afghans have fled their homes fearing the worst.

EXPRESS READ

Rahul raps Twitter; notice to FB, Insta

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused Twitter of "interfering in the national political process" by locking his account. He said it denied lakhs of his followers access to his views. Meanwhile, the NCPCR asked Facebook to take action against the Instagram profile of Gandhi for posting a photo of the family of the nine-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and murdered in Delhi | P9

Trial nod for Bharat Biotech's nasal vax

New Delhi: The first nasal vaccine against Covid-19, developed by Bharat Biotech, has received regulator's nod for conducting Phase 2 clinical trials, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) said on Friday. The Phase 1 clinical trials have been completed in age groups ranging from 18 to 60 years, it said. This is a first-of-its-kind Covid vaccine to undergo human clinical trials in India, the DBT said | P9

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

August 12	50,77,491 doses
August 13	55,91,675 doses

TOTAL DOSES: 54,57,69,783

NATION WIDE	AUG 12	AUG 13
Fresh cases	41,195	40,120
Recoveries	39,069	45,295
Deaths	490	585

KARNATAKA	AUG 12	AUG 13
Fresh cases	1,857	1,669
Recoveries	1,950	1,672
Deaths	30	22

BOEING
DEDICATED TO INDIA'S FUTURE
On India's 75th Independence Day, Boeing remains dedicated to the inspiring progress of the nation and proudly supports its focus towards becoming a global leader in aerospace and defence.